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AUTHOR Shadiow, Linda K.
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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses how higher education involvement with community service can be sustained and strengthened. There has been increased discussion of community and university partnerships during the last few years, as exemplified by the summer 1991 issue of "Teachers College Record." Higher education is challenged to integrate service activities into the intellectual work of the faculty. Boyer's "Scholarship Reconsidered" identifies four categories of scholarship: (1) the scholarship of discovery; (2) the scholarship of integration; (3) the scholarship of application; and (4) the scholarship of teaching. Through the scholarship of application, the potential exists to incorporate scholarly activity in public service ventures by testing theories in the field and gaining new intellectual understandings. There are two examples of opportunities to strengthen the support for service work in higher education. First, the University of Pennsylvania initiated an undergraduate honors history course entitled, "Urban Universities and Community Relationships." Second, President Bush's educational strategy proposal, America 2000, offers opportunities such as a network of American 2000 communities, a New American Schools Development Corporation, and research and development teams. (KS)

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CHANGE AND DIVERSITY: COMMUNITIES LINK WITH HIGHER EDUCATION

Reconsidering the Nature of Service Partnerships

Panel Presentation, National Conference on Rural Adult Education Initiatives
Kansas City, Missouri - June 20, 1991

Linda K. Shadiow, Northern Arizona University

I recently heard Larry Cuban of Stanford talk about his belief that educational reform is hampered by our inability to distinguish between problems and dilemmas. What he viewed as being an important difference between the two can be illustrated simply: "What is 2 plus 5?" is a problem. "Why is 2 plus 5 seven?" is a dilemma. Pointing to problems and discussing solutions is vitally important; my panel colleagues have given you some of the solutions to the problems that arise in rural locals related to multicultural education, but I propose to talk with you about an accompanying dilemma. Let me reformulate the key elements of the title of this panel discussion using the problem/dilemma distinction:

"What is the result - - or sum - - of combining community and higher education efforts?"

That is the problem for which you have heard a number of innovative outcomes.

"In times of dwindling resources and heightened expectations, how can the higher education involvement with communities be sustained and strengthened?" That is the dilemma. Within the brief time allowed by this panel format, I will focus on three aspects of this dilemma: 1. current status; 2. current reconsiderations; 3. current examples & opportunities.

I. The nature and status of community/university partnerships is up for public examination and discussion.

While there have been a number of such discussions in the popular and professional press during the last few years, let me use the most recent example I have seen to illustrate this. The university's role and responsibilities in community partnerships is the focal point for extended discussion in the current issue of Teachers College Record (Summer 1991). In that issue, the opening editorial addresses the degree to which "service" is left out of the debate on the relative merits of and weight given to research and teaching in the university reward system. The ICR

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Linda K. Shadiow

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issue's editor claims that the attention garnered by the vocal advocates on both sides of that debate has, in fact, created an inhospitable environment for the discussion of the role of service.

In this ICR issue, Donna Shalala, Maxine Greene and others wonder about the old adage that "communities have problems while universities have departments" as they explore ways to recast the town/gown image. One writer compares the university role to that of one of Hercules' opponents in Greek mythology - this opponent was ultimately subdued by being held high in the air deprived of contact with mother earth. Taken as a whole, this ICR issue wonders if too many universities are holding themselves too high above a too fertile ground to maintain any viable relationship - or if the traditional means of reviewing and promoting faculty within the university, in fact, does this to individual professors.

"The challenge is not to restrict service activities but to think about how they might be better integrated into the core activities of the university and the central intellectual work of its faculty." (526) Discussions like this have led to reconsiderations...

II. The most prominent current reconsideration of the role of the service activities of higher education faculty has occurred, I believe, in Ernest Boyer's Scholarship Reconsidered.

Samuel Freedman, by the way, the author of a book, Small Victories, which describes life and work in a Bronx school, has said that true educational reform will only emerge from "enlightened self-interest." That is the tradition in which I see Boyer's thought-provoking monograph has been written.

Characterizing our current view of scholarship as one of "restricted vision" that fails to recognize separate but overlapping scholarly functions, Boyer makes a case for the "scholarship of integration," and identifies four categories that form "an interdependent whole." Within this framework is the potential for reshaping community/university partnerships so they are recognized and rewarded within university settings and thus carry increased potential for sustained efforts with broader applications. Briefly, I will define all four of Boyer's categories of

scholarship and illustrate this reconsideration in the category most immediately identifiable as the one with implications for recasting service partnerships.

The four categories in Boyer's paradigm include: the scholarship of discovery ("disciplined, investigative efforts that lead to the discovery of new knowledge"); the scholarship of integration ("disciplined interpretive work that brings new insight to bear on original research - an examination of the *connectedness* of things"); the scholarship of application ("service activities where new intellectual understandings arise from an interaction of theory and practice -- with a clear distinction between *citizenship* activities and service activities tied to one's scholarship"); the scholarship of teaching ("as a *scholarly* enterprise, teaching that educates and entices future scholars - the dynamic endeavor that, through analogies, metaphors, and images, builds bridges between the teacher's understanding and the student's learning - transmitting knowledge, and transforming and extending it as well.").

During partnership planning phases, paying deliberate attention to the categorical distinctions that Boyer describes may uncover the common ground that allows an idea for meeting a community need (an idea that could fall under a "citizenship" service label) to be shaped to meet the university scholarship mission (most probably the scholarship of application).

For example: The scholarship of application (or, moving beyond the review of literature required in the grant application...): What potential exists in this partnership for moving beyond the context of citizenship to the context of scholarly service? In what areas of this partnership is there the potential for gaining new intellectual understandings? What theories form the basis for the actions planned within this partnership, and how might this partnership contribute to further understanding or clarification of theory?

A similar approach can be taken with the other scholarship categories and this re-forming of the partnership idea could bring the tangible rewards that make the intangible rewards possible. This "enlightened self-interest" has benefits for both partners. There is not enough time to explore the potential for this in developing university/community partnerships but there are both examples and opportunities for doing this ...

III. **Just by eavesdropping on hallway conversations or by attending the formal conference sessions, you will find examples and opportunities for establishing partnerships with this new language and new dimension likely to strengthen the support for service work. Here are two:**

In 1985 the University of Pennsylvania initiated an undergraduate honors history course, "Urban Universities and Community Relationships." In this course, students developed seminar projects which identified a community problem and then which proposed a solution using existing agencies and resources. Since the media continues to be fascinated by the annual engineering student problem-solving competitions like floating a cement canoe or dropping an egg from a tall building, it would seem that there is a currently unrecognized place for more real-world problem solving activities in other academic programs, even at the undergraduate level. Many examples such as this can serve as templates for the development of locally responsive partnerships.

Given the degree to which the volume on the educational reform discussions has recently been turned up a few notches with President Bush's educational strategy proposal, America 2000, unrecognized opportunities also exist. Although the six national goals that are a part of the America 2000 plan have been the highly publicized destinations-of-the-moment on the road to improved literacy and achievement, the less publicized strategies in the more extensive document (America 2000 Sourcebook) outline many of the vehicles through which the current administration plans to arrive at those destinations - these vehicles are not one or two-seater sports cars, but vans that can carry enough passengers to qualify for a ride in the diamond lane - a lane with potentially more funding and fewer regulations that will allow select partnerships to speed toward those destinations more quickly. The opportunities (which exist in the plan and will eventually exist in reality in some version or other based on legislative input and approval) include governors' academies for teachers and for school leaders, a New American Schools Development Corporation, 3-7 research/development teams, a network of American 2000 communities, and 535+ New American Schools (one for each congressional district in the US as well as DC, Puerto Rico Rico, and US territories). At this stage, each of these "vehicles" includes a finance plan

aimed at making the leasing of these vehicles available to more than the usually-thought-of "new idea owners." There are examples and there are opportunities. In sum:

1. The current status of university/community partnerships is one of a mix of rhetoric and reality - with both elements running the full scale of quality. A keen ear, a healthy skepticism, and a tailor's skill at judging the potential for personal fit are the best tools for fashioning reason and response.

2. The current reconsiderations of the traditional tripartite university mission open avenues for renewed discussion, passionate commitment, and potential impact. An understanding of mutual needs and an "enlightened self-interest" are the tools for constructing a new scaffold that is less fragile and more enduring upon which to base service partnerships.

3. There are current examples and opportunities of university-assisted, school-based, community-action partnerships which can foster improved integration and strengthened collaboration - a long way around saying more people can be united to accomplish mutual goals with sustained and positive impact.

The passion to do this work is not new, but the circumstances - the resources - are changing. Our willingness to work toward finding, as Maxine Greene suggests, "new words for old songs" is critical. There is no better way to conclude these brief remarks and to illustrate the cooperative imperative of this venture than to select some of the same words Greene does as she concludes her essay in the TCR issue I have already mentioned - the words of the poet Adrienne Rich from, "Dream of a Common Language":

The rules break like a thermometer,
quicksilver spills across the charted systems,
we're out in a country that has no language
no laws, we're chasing the raven and the wren
through gorges unexplored since dawn
whatever we do together is pure invention
the maps they gave us were out of date
by years...

NOTES

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